

6 honoured with Merdeka Awards

> Outstanding individuals recognised for contributions to country

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KUALA LUMPUR: Six individuals were recognised for their contributions to the country when they were accorded the Merdeka Award yesterday by the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah.

Former Bank Islam Malaysia managing director Datuk Dr Abdul Halim Ismail received the award under the Education and Community category for his role in establishing the first Islamic Bank in Malaysia, which led to the development and growth of the Islamic banking, insurance and finance sectors nationally and in the region.

He had left the academic field to apply his skills and knowledge in a more pragmatic and actionable career, which put him on the path to becoming one of the leading Islamic bankers.

"Until as recently as the 1990s, Muslims were facing a dilemma in the conventional or Western way of banking. This dilemma arose because in Islamic laws, charging interest is forbidden. This caused Muslims to stay away from conventional banking institutes."

The establishment of Islamic banks and Takaful Insurance earned the trust of Muslims, he added.

Under the Environment category, former chairman of the



ZULFADHLI ZAKI/
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Sultan Nazrin (fifth from right) and Wan Zulkifli (fourth from right) with the award recipients last night at the Petronas Philharmonic Hall in Kuala Lumpur.

Sabah Tourism Board Datuk Seri Dr Tengku Zainal Adlin Tengku Mahamood was awarded for his contribution to wildlife and forest conservation in Malaysia and the region.

He initiated the conservation of the Danum Valley and Maliau Basin in Sabah by the Sabah Foundation, and even has a species of the Rafflesia flower named after him, the Rafflesia tengku-adlinii.

Tengku Zainal's efforts through fieldwork, education, advocacy, policy and international cooperation saw him featured in Forbes Global as "The Sabah Eco Warrior".

Under the Health, Science and

Technology category, professor of Molecular Parasitology at the Malaria Research Centre in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Prof Dr Balbir Singh Mohan Singh, and director of the Jesselton Medical Centre Infectious and Tropical Diseases Department in Kota Kinabalu, Dr Timothy William, were jointly given the award for their contributions to the pioneering work and discovery of a new strain of malaria, Plasmodium knowlesi.

The discovery of this potentially fatal zoonotic disease has changed the way it is managed globally.

Chairman of the National Professors Council (University of

Malaya Chapter), Prof Dr Masjuki Hasan, was accorded the Outstanding Scholastic Achievement award for his research in engineering and energy science, and his role in the research and development of biofuel and other sources of efficient energy and automotive engines.

In the Outstanding Contribution to the People of Malaysia category for foreign individuals or organisations for their work in Malaysia, former Tun Hussein Onn Chair of International Studies at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Prof Dr Anthony Crothers Milner, was awarded for his work in research

and education in Malaysian history and his role in fostering international collaborations.

Also present at the event were the Raja Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim, Petronas chairman Tan Sri Sidek Hassan, as well as its president and group chief executive officer Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin.

Since the establishment of the Merdeka Award on Aug 27, 2007 by Petronas, ExxonMobil and Shell, 44 recipients and two organisations have received the honours.

Each category confers a Merdeka Award Trophy, Merdeka Award Work of Art, a certificate and a cash prize of RM500,000.



Kechara Soup Kitchen staff and volunteers presenting sundry goods to families.

Groceries for underprivileged families

KUALA LUMPUR: Poor families in the city can now have some warm home-cooked meals, thanks to the groceries delivered to their doorstep by Kechara Soup Kitchen Society.

About 200 families selected by the non-profit organisation will get a month's supply of groceries, which includes common staples like rice, salt, sugar, soy sauce, cooking oil, biscuits, powdered milk and some canned goods.

"We deliver the groceries to the families

we identify. And we contribute to families from all races. The bags are valued at about RM100 each and the deliveries are done almost daily by either our staff or volunteers. The families are from all over the city," Kechara project director Justin Cheah said, adding that it is usually the same families that receive the goods.

"By receiving the grocery bags, they can prepare a simple meal at home. This stops them from being on the streets, looking for something to eat. As long as they are poor

and need help, we try to provide them the grocery bags," he added.

With basic groceries taken care of, the families can use whatever meagre earnings they have for other needs like paying the rent, utilities, medical or even education needs.

theSun has also teamed up with zubedy's #SaySomethingNice and contributed RM12,000 from its theSun Cares Fund, which will be used to supply groceries monthly for 10 families as part of the campaign.

Probe on sale of overpriced parking coupons

PETALING JAYA: The Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) has started a probe into an agent who allegedly sold parking coupons above the set price of RM6.

An MBPJ Finance Department spokesman said the investigation began after the council received complaints and action will be taken against the offender.

The parking booklet, which consists of 10 parking tickets, is sold at RM6 but there are some traders who are selling it for RM6.50.

Bukit Gasing assemblyman Rajiv Rishiyakaran said so far he had not received any complaint about agents selling the booklets above the permissible price.

"The public can lodge complaints with the local council if they find any agent selling the coupon above the price stated on the cover," Rajiv said.

The parking coupon system was re-introduced this month by MBPJ after over 20 years since the system was discontinued in the 1990s.

The coupon system is an alternative to the existing parking meters which are still operational.

There are three types of coupons available - an hourly coupon booklet sold for RM6 where each booklet has 10 coupons worth 60 sen for hourly use, a daily coupon booklet sold for RM25 and has five coupons, each at RM5 for daily use, and a monthly coupon sold at RM100 that can be used for the whole month.